

THE

641.9 31

# EGOTIST:

OR,

COLLEY upon CIBBER,

BEING

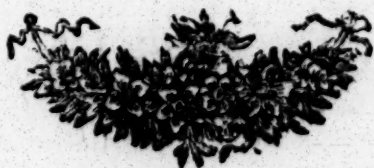
His own Picture retouch'd, to so *plain*  
a Likeness, that no One, *now*, would  
have the Face to own it,  
But H I M S E L F.

---

*But one Stroke more, and That shall be my Last.*

DRYDEN.

---



---

L O N D O N,

Printed : And Sold by W. LEWIS in *Russel-Street,*  
*Covent-Garden.*

---

M DCC XLIII.

[Price One Shilling.]

ENT



43.

7 6  
298





T H E  
P R E F A C E:

Not quite Unnecessary.

**A**N *Author that talks of himself, without being called to it, in his own Defence, like a Gentleman who treads the Stage for his own Diversion, does it against Odds; he is himself, the only good Soul, pleased with his Performance: When we meet with an Instance to the contrary, we still know he has play'd a desperate Game. Yet, methinks, if the Author could be bold enough to write fair, and honestly rally his own Errors, he might have a better Chance for our Indulgence or Favour, than those easy Egotists, whose Labours, under all their Art, carry a visible Penchant to their own Panegyrics. But so it is! Self is too sacred a Subject to be prophan'd; and to play with our Infirmities below the Dignity of a Genius! as well we might expect a Pope to jest upon his Infallibility, as a Satyrist to be the Subject of his own Ridicule! For however skilful he may be in the Care of others, he is never so low in his Practice, as to take a single Dose of the Physick he gives.*

A 2

No!

## The P R E F A C E.

No! our Modern Writers have a surer way of keeping their Fame in Health, and rather choose to rely on their own, than their Reader's Judgment, to secure them that Praise, which without their laying such violent Hands upon it, Justice, and Candour might not have deny'd them. To keep as clear, therefore, as possible from the Imputation I lay upon others, I have, in the following Discourse, (intended as the last Sitting to my Picture) raised up an imaginary Opponent (by way of Shade and Light) who, whenever he perceives my Vanity peeping out from under the Masque of Modesty, shall roundly rally it; yet not without some Indulgence to it, as a Frailty inseparable from our Nature.

Suppose, then, such a Friend in a Morning Visit to have surpriz'd me in the very Act of Scribbling, meerly to kill time; rather choosing to do something to little or no Purpose, than to sit always idle. To make the Conversation less tedious, by the frequent Repetition of the said He's, and said I's, which a continued Narrative would be liable to, I have given it in a tête à tête, or a Dialogue between Mr. Frankly and his old Acquaintance

Your Humble Servant,

The Author, C. CIBBER.

THE





THE  
EGOTIST.

---

FRANKLY *and the* AUTHOR.

*Fran.* ELL, old Gentleman ! What are you upon now ? What are all those Papers before you ?

*Auth.* Umph ! I don't well know——A parcel of Rubbish, Prose, and Poetry, Frolicks of younger Days, that I have been rummaging out of my Closet.

*Fran.* With a Design to publish them, I hope.

*Auth.* No ! I don't find my good Opinion of them quite high enough for that yet.

*Fran.* At least you need not fear having too low an Opinion of what other People will like ; don't you daily see what foul Feeders they



they are? What woful Wits are at work every Night, for the Meal of the next Morning?

*Auth.* That may be; but I should not care to cram them against my Conscience.

*Fran.* Good lack! the Conscience of an Author is a mighty pretty thing indeed! Print them! Print them, Man: Toss them up boldly! they will make an odd merry Medley, I warrant you.

*Auth.* O Yes! any thing that shews me egregiously in the Wrong, will always be mighty Matter of Mirth to you: But, I shall not gratify your Rallery that way! My Folly is not yet so valiant as to impose any thing upon the Publick that I don't like myself.

*Fran.* Why impose? If the Publick are Fools enough to buy them, there can be no great Matter of Conscience in it; *Volenti*, you know, *non fit injuria*. The Publick is not obliged to buy.

*Auth.* Nor am I yet vain enough to suppose I could make Fools of them, if I would; or so fond of a few Pence, as really to do it, if I could.

*Fran.* Hah! this Conscience of yours is a mighty nice Lady, I find: There will be no way to bring her to what she has a mind to,  
but

but by a little decent Force: Why then, don't you get them fairly printed without your Consent?

*Auth.* This might be very pretty, for ought I know; but how shall I consent to do any thing against my will?

*Fran.* Lord! you know nothing of the World! Why, it is *as easy as Lying*, as *Hamlet* says. Cannot you get a third Person, who may sell them to *Buckle* the Bookseller without your Knowledge?

*Auth.* How can we suppose he will buy them of a Stranger, and *no Questions asked*, &c?

*Fran.* Pooh! we can soon furnish him with a flim-flam Story of an Accident that dropt them into his Hands; and then, Sir, pray where's the Difficulty? Won't they be honestly printed without your Consent?

*Auth.* Well, Sir, I see I must not stand with you for a little Honesty: But pray what is to be the Consequence of all this Ingenuity?

*Fran.* You'll find your Account in it, I warrant you: For, upon so gross a Provocation, the least you can do is to be angry, or (if you please) ashamed, that so many loose Trifles, which you never intended should see the Light, should so barbarously be exposed to the Publick Censure: Upon which, you know, your violated Modesty, much against your Nature,



Nature, will be reduced to the Necessity of entering into a Paper War with the bold Mr. *Buckle* for so inhuman an Injury: But be sure, you make the Quarrel strong, that the Papers, in dispute, however insignificant in reality, may seem to the Publick of the highest Importance. Now your Case, you must own, will be very deplorable, when a Book comes out, in your Name, so full of Faults which you never committed. How plausible a Pretence then will you have to publish a genuine Edition, less incorrect at least, and perhaps with some (to however little purpose) Amendments; But be those as they may, they cannot be so bad, but at worst they must, in Sale, be preferable to the surreptitious Edition of Mr. *Buckle*. Now, Sir, by this clean Contrivance you see, while you are excusing your Blushes, you may be twice paid for the same Copy.

*Auth.* Ay! marry, Sir! this would be a *Coup-de-maitre*, indeed! This would be a *Bibliopolitical* Stroke, above them all! But I am afraid, Sir, my slight Reputation is not strong enough to strike it; a Book is not sure to sell, merely because it has my Name to it: So that, tho' my Conscience would be never so easy in the Matter, I fancy I had as good be quiet, and keep my idle Papers at home; or if  
ever

ever I should send them abroad, they shall even honestly jog on in the old Road.

*Fran.* Would any Man wear his Conscience as you do like an old Coat, 'till it's quite out of Fashion? Then for your Reputation, if you won't bustle about it, and now and then give it these little Helps of Art, how can you hope to raise it?

*Auth.* If it can't live upon simple Nature, let it die, and be damn'd! I shall give myself no farther Trouble about it.

*Fran.* So you won't publish upon any Terms?

*Auth.* Not in haste, 'till I see whether they are fit for a Book, or a Bonfire.

*Fran.* Nay then I give you over, if you once sink into Prudence or Modesty, you will soon be good for nothing.

*Auth.* Don't be afraid of losing me; I shall always have Folly enough left, to keep in *your* Favour, I warrant you.

*Fran.* Give me an Instance of it now, then: Shew me some of your Papers.

*Auth.* No, Sir, as little ashamed as I am of my Follies, I don't choose to shew them, but when I can't help it. When I am Fool enough to think they are fit to be seen, you

B

shall



shall laugh at me, as loud as you please:  
But till I have a little retouch'd them——

*Fran.* Pooh! no matter; let me see them,  
as they are; a Sketch will shew a Master, as  
well as a finish'd Piece will.

*Auth.* It may be so: But 'till I think my  
self Master enough to shew my Sketches——

*Fran.* You don't consider my Taste; I love  
Nature in her Undress, better than in all her  
prim Pride of Embroidery.

*Auth.* Ay! to be sure! and raw Meat, ra-  
ther than roasted. Though you are a Can-  
nibal, I shall not expose my Cookery.

*Fran.* Expose a Rump! you don't use to  
be so tender of your Faults: Come! come!  
Your Conceptions, I know, may be seen in  
their first Birth, like *Venus* rising from the  
Sea, before she had a Rag upon her, or as  
*Cowley* says——

*Arm'd cap-à-pie with Nakedness.*

*Auth.* You are deadly witty this Morning:  
How shall I do, not to be vain upon it?

*Fran.* Why, if you are; what does it sig-  
nify?

*Auth.* Nay that's true! it hurts nobody but  
myself, indeed.

*Fran.*

*Fran.* And that's in your own Power to pardon too: A sort of Good-nature, that you Authors seldom want for yourselves.

*Auth.* Though we have not the least Grain of it for a Brother. 'Tis true, I have sometimes been a little callous to their Criticisms; but would you believe it? I am not yet quite so harden'd as to publish any thing, that I am conscious they ought not to be pleas'd with.

*Fran.* And yet your Works begin to swell; Your Conscience has publish'd a good deal.

*Auth.* Ho! I don't tell you, that my Vanity may not sometimes have deceived me into Writing, what I could wish the World had never seen! Yes! yes! I have my share of Ignorance, as well as my Betters, and yet not so much but that I am convinc'd, were I to jumble those Papers before me into a Volume, and to steal them into the World, as you advise me, one half of it would think me a Fool, and the other a Madman.

*Fran.* And pray, Sir, would that give you any Concern? For, by the Picture you have drawn of yourself in your *Apology*, one would think it should?

*Auth.* Though I allow the Picture to be like; yet if, with my Eyes open, I do a



foolish or a mad Thing, I don't see why I might not be ashamed of it, and yet be consistent with my Character.

*Fran.* And if you should *not* be ashamed of it, would not that be as like you too?

*Auth.* No. For if I *knew* the thing to be wrong, I ought to be ashamed of it, because it would then be a wilful Error: But if I commit it through Ignorance, 'tis Nature's Fault, not mine; and I cannot see why I am to be concerned for what I am not accountable.

*Fran.* Ay, but no Blockhead is so dull, as not to be fore when he is called so: And (you'll excuse me) if that were to be your own Case, why should we believe you would not be as uneasy at it as another Blockhead?

*Auth.* This is pushing me pretty home indeed — but I won't give out. For as it is not at all inconceivable, that a Blockhead of my Size may have a particular Knack of doing some useful thing, that might puzzle a wiser Man to be Master of; will not that Blockhead still have something, in him, to be conceited of? If so, allow me but the Vanity of supposing, I may have had some such possible Knack, and you will not wonder, (tho'

(tho' in many other Points I may still be a Blockhead) that I may notwithstanding be contented with my Condition.

*Fran.* But could you really be contented, if you thought other People believed you were *not* contented with it ?

*Auth.* What the Devil! will they suppose me a Hypocrite only to deceive myself ?

*Fran.* Have a care! this Warmth is a little suspicious ! I am afraid you will discover yourself ; and your Philosophical Air will come out at last meer Vanity in Masquerade.

*Auth.* O ! if there be Vanity in keeping one's Temper ; with all my Heart. They who find fault with That, will only confess they should not be able to keep theirs upon the same Occasion.

*Fran.* Soft and fair. If I were to call you *weak* for not being of my Opinion, might not you possibly think it a little Spice of my Vanity ?

*Auth.* Perhaps not : But why so nice, good Sir ? May not I tax another with Weakness, without being vain of my own Strength ?

*Fran.* But do you think it Weakness ; or rather is it not commendable in a Man of Parts, to be warmly concerned for his Reputation ?

*Auth.*



*Auth.* In what regards his Honesty or Honour, I will make you some Allowances : But for the Reputation of his Parts, not one Tittle ?

*Fran.* How ! not to be concerned for what half the learned World are in a continual War about ?

*Auth.* So are another half about Religion : But neither Turk or Pope, Swords or Anathemas can alter Truth ! There it stands ! Always visible to Reason, Self-defended and Immoveable ! Whatever it *was*, or *is*, it ever will be : As no Attack can alter, so no Defence can add to its Proportion.

*Fran.* At this Rate you pronounce all Controversies in Wit, to be either needless or impertinent.

*Auth.* When one in a hundred happens *not* to be so, or to make amends for being either by its Pleasantry, we ought in Justice to allow it a great Rarity.

*Fran.* Let it be a Rarity ! Will that make a just Satyr or Criticism impertinent ?

*Auth.* I have not said it will : But a Reply to either of them will seldom be thought better of.

*Fran.* May not a Reply be a good one ?

*Auth.*

*Auth.* Yes: But never absolutely necessary: For as your Work (or Reputation) must have been good, or bad, before it was censured, your Reply to that Censure could not alter it: It would still be but what it was: If it was good, the Attack could not hurt it: If bad, the Reply could not mend it.

*Fran.* This is a Doctrine, I doubt, that will have but few Followers: Neither our modern Poets or those of the last Century cared to come into it——It will be always natural for Authors to defend their Works.

*Auth.* And would not it be as well, if their Works defended themselves?

*Fran.* Don't you think several of them do?

*Auth.* Let them be many or few; all that have that Merit will therefore need no other Defence.

*Fran.* But while People will still be censuring——

*Auth.* Why let them censure! have not they a Right to it? Why did you publish? Is not that submitting to them?

*Fran.* Does that give them a Right to be abusive, or to accuse me wrongfully?

*Auth.* If they had a Power to make White Black, or Right Wrong, your Case would be hard indeed; but as you are sure your whole

Jury



Jury of Readers are not to be corrupted by the Railing of one Man, you have nobody's Verdict but theirs to be afraid of.

*Fran.* Well! and suppose they acquit me, shall any Man however abuse me with Impunity, or unanswer'd?

*Auth.* Let him alone; and your Revenge will soon be up with him. Every honest Man will think him a Slanderer; and whenever they stile him so in your Hearing, is not your Triumph greater than if you called him so yourself? You would not be such a Churl sure as to grudge him the Pleasure of being an impotent Enemy!

*Fran.* But Slander is not always so impotent as you seem to suppose it; Men of the best Sense may be misled by it, or by their not enquiring after Truth may never come at it; and the Vulgar, as they are less apt to be Good than Ill-natured, often mistake Malice for Wit, and have an uncharitable Joy in commending it. Now when this is the Case; is not a tame Silence, upon being satyrically libell'd, as liable to be thought Guilt or Stupidity, as to be the Result of Innocence, or Temper?

*Auth.* If you have any more to offer on your Side of the Question, go on, that I may consider it all together.

*Fran.*

*Fran.* The Argument does not concern me enough, to be studious about it: But sure! when a Man's Writings or Reputation are publicly attacked, Self-defence is a very natural and just Excuse for his Reply.

*Auth.* Be it so! But still that does not always make it necessary: For tho' Slander, by their not weighing it, may pass upon some few People of Sense for Truth, and might draw great Numbers of the Vulgar into its Party, the Mischief can never be of long Duration: A satirical Slander that has no Truth to support it, is only a great Fish upon dry Land: It may flounce and fling, and make a fretful Pother; but it won't bite you, you need not knock it on the Head; it will soon lie still, and die quietly of itself. As for the Vulgar, whom I admit we ought not always to despise; though a Falsity may blind their Judgment, it cannot put out their Eyes; and when Truth occasionally shews herself naked before them, they will be apt to turn tail, and be as warm on her Side, as they once were against her. In this Consequence I have had Experience to back me, and therefore, as *Bays* says, *Experto crede Roberto*.

*Fran.* I shall not dispute what you may know to be true: Yet methinks all this is but cold

C

Comfort



Comfort to a Man under the Smart of Defamation.

*Auth.* Why the Smart? Will a Man smart at the Crack of a Whip, that does not reach him?

*Fran.* What if it don't, it's intended to reach him? And the Laws of Honour make no Difference between a lifted Arm and a Blow; they are equally to be resented!

*Auth.* Suppose they are. I hope a satirical Picture, whether like or unlike, is not an equal *Disgrace*? Nay admitting your Name is writ under it, will that add to the Resemblance? And when the Features are not yours, will not the Name be a *Misnomer*? As for the Satyrist, let him be as able an Artist as you please, if he is reduced to those low Shifts, and dares not trust to the Truth of his Colours, he debases himself to a dirty Dawber of Sign-Posts.

*Fran.* Pooh! these are nice Distinctions, that our natural Passions are not always at leisure to make or to mind.

*Auth.* O! ho! our Passions! Ay! they are mighty pretty Gentlemen! They perhaps will find a shorter Way to their Revenge! Call an Aggressor out with a cock'd Hat, and by an honourable

honourable Satisfaction soon make the Cause a clear Case!

*Fran.* If they should, could any Man of Honour think them in the Wrong?

*Auth.* Can any Man be in the Right that fights to no Purpose?

*Fran.* Why to no Purpose? Ought not the Vindication of every Man's Character to be dear to him?

*Auth.* If his Character be notoriously bad, nothing can vindicate it: If it be unquestionably good, it will vindicate itself.

*Fran.* And yet you see even the Law, that has no Passions, provides as well for the Redress of the Guilty as the Innocent: If you call a Woman *Whore*, though you yourself may know who made her so, she has her Action against you. Is not this a Confession then, that Scandal, whether with or without Foundation, is an Injury?

*Auth.* I will admit it an Injury; but still a bad Character will not be alter'd by any Revenge or Redress the Law may give, or your Courage can take. When a Satirist therefore describes a notorious Cheat or Sharper, in Colours that are like him, tho' the Sword's-man might get the better of his poetical Aggressor in the Field, he has only the better of the



Battle, not of the Argument. His Victory may be a Proof of his Courage indeed, but none of his Integrity : He will still be thought the same Sharper by the next Company he comes into. This then I call fighting to no Purpose.

*Fran.* And by the same Way of Reasoning, I suppose you think a Reply to a satirical Insult, is *writing* to no Purpose.

*Auth.* Certainly ! in either Case, the guilty or the innocent draw the Sword or the Pen against invincible Truth, or a weak Enemy. An unjust Satire is but a palpable Lye, and would you be at all the more a Negroe for being called one ? Would there need any stronger Proof than the Sight of your Face to confute it ?

*Fran.* And yet if Dirt is thrown in my Face, you'll allow me to wash it.

*Auth.* And when it misses you, what need you wash it ? Leave the Libel to the sight of its own Words ! If they are false, they will be but so much Air in the Scale against you : For as well as the World loves Malice, it is not in People's Power to disbelieve their Consciences ; and when every one will find There a Witness in your Cause, why should you be afraid of losing it ? Deserve as fair a Character

Character as you please, but never be anxious about it: A Reputation in Health, has no occasion to purge itself for every idle Rumour that runs about it: The World will always have something to say against the best Man that lives in it; and if he cannot be content with not deserving their Ill-word, if he will needs measure his Quiet, rather by the Opinion of others, than by his own Integrity, I would not wish to see my Enemy a more miserable Creature.

*Fran.* Ha! ha! ha! This is as good as I desire! You may be sure, I shall allow you Right in your Doctrine, because it proves you so evidently wrong in your Practice.

*Auth.* I know what you mean; But let my Practice have been never so idle, my Argument will not be a Tittle the worse for it.

*Fran.* Nay! if you grant your late Letter to the little Gentleman, that has sported so many *Licks at the Laureate* (as you call them) to be an idle thing, I will not ask any more of you.

*Auth.* Well then, as far as doing an *unnecessary* thing is so, I grant it an idle thing.

*Fran.* I'gad, thou art an incomprehensible Fellow, that canst be so near knowing what is right, and yet canst persuade thy Conscience

to



to fly in the Face on't with such Intrepidity! Prithee, my dear, happy Creature, be so good now as to let me know from whence you, of all Mankind, claim this particular Privilege?

*Auth.* From my Temper. An Insensibility to all the Displeasures of Life, that only concern myself. Any Man that has a little Ambition for Fame, as I have, may enjoy the same Privilege with as little Disturbance.

*Fran.* O prithee don't put that upon us! was not your Letter an Evidence of your Concern to defend your Character?

*Auth.* No! for if it did defend it; that was but an occasional Consequence, that attended the Frolick of writing it.

*Fran.* The Frolick! nay then, we shall never have done. Pray, Sir, what occasioned the Frolick then?

*Auth.* Mere social Gaiety! it naturally rose from the wanton War, I have, all my Life long been in, with my Friends, and which I hope will never be ended.

*Fran.* Nay, 'tis the oddest Life that ever was led, I believe.

*Auth.* May be so; and 'tis the Oddness has made it so easy.

*Fran.*

*Fran.* Well! I won't contradict that.

*Auth.* You may, if you will.

*Fran.* No! no! pray go on: I long to see how you will come off.

*Auth.* To be as serious then, as you seem to wish I would — You are yourself a Witness how every Line in our *English Horace*, that had a Flirt at me, has been enjoy'd by a whole Table of Laughters: Now though I often found, that this was but a *solamen miseris* to some of them, who had been sore of the same Pen; yet I had no reason to take their Laugh as the least Ill-meaning to me: For though Rallery may be Cruelty where it hits and hurts; yet in a different View, where it only designs to raise (or expects) a Reply, it is but a friendly Mark of social Approbation. This then being the Case, it might well be suspected that these *socii doloris* or Fellow-Sufferers naturally wish'd any one, but themselves, would be provok'd enough to be the Champion of our common Quarrel: Now, as they knew my callous Character would better bear being drubb'd, and had less to lose in the Danger than any of theirs; 'tis not impossible, but for want of a bolder Man they might have had their Eyes upon your humble Servant. But there was still this Difficulty to get over:  
The



The Insensibility wherewith I had borne so many Blows for Years together, they knew could not be rouz'd, but by redoubling their Attacks upon the Facility of my Temper, which I own is sometimes so absent, so supine, and liable to be taken in, that an old Apple-woman might often get the better of me. To conclude, I was so rallied by their defying my Capacity, and daring my Courage to attempt a Reply, that I could no longer resist letting them make the best of the Scrape they so chuckled to draw me into.

*Fran.* Well, Sir, though I own this is no common Case, and that I know a good deal of it to be true; yet I have still some Scruples upon me——

*Auth.* I will hear 'em presently, but let me conclude.——Now, Sir, I say, this being my (so particular) Case, I cannot see where it invalidates the Argument I have taken such pains to support, *viz.* That a defamatory Satire or Libel, can never be worth any honest Man's while to make a Reply to.

*Fran.* Suppose it gratifies his Revenge!

*Auth.* Can any Revenge be greater than Contempt for an intended Injury that misses its Aim? —— Now what are your Scruples?

*Fran.*

*Fran.* Why—However you may hope, this Stoical Air will pass you, upon some People, for an impenetrable *Integer vitæ*; yet I doubt you will hardly persuade a great many, that in this pretended *gaieté de cœur* to please your Friends, your Letter had not an Eye to the Hurt you thought it might do your Aggressor.

*Auth.* Unless my keeping my Temper could make him lose his, I won't suppose I *have* hurt him: If I did him wrong I hurt myself, if Justice he has nothing to complain of; let Truth answer for herself then — what I did was by her Direction: In a word, I had no other way of turning the Jest upon my Ralliers, than by getting the Publick to head it against them; in which I have so far succeeded that they are now, it seems, forced to be fond of a new Joke that is not come out yet.

*Fran.* What do yo mean?

*Auth.* Terrible Rods in Poetical Pickle for me, that are to give them a tickling Triumph!

*Fran.* I don't hear of any; but have you really no Dread of them?

*Auth.* If I were conscious that Truth could hurt me, I should not have Courage enough to defy it; but, unless I were a Pick-pocket, why am I to be in Fear of a Whipping-post?

D

*Fran.*



*Fran.* Have a care! a Man may be a very ridiculous Subject for Satire without being a Criminal.

*Auth.* If a Satirist, that knows them, tells me of my Faults, he had better let them alone: For whenever he does, I'll try to mend them, I can tell him but that.

*Fran.* A terrible Menace indeed! if you keep your Word.

*Auth.* If I don't, it will be at my own Peril; if I do, I make him an involuntary Friend, and then his Satire will be no more than a wholsom Dose of Physick. But if he puts my Name to Follies or Faults that don't belong to me, his Libel will be directly then a Purge with a wrong Label, and the Author must only talk like an Apothecary that does not mind his Business.

*Fran.* And who shall be Judge whether the Faults imputed belong to you or not?

*Auth.* I' gad! I'll even trust to the wide World for that, as wicked as it is.

*Fran.* What the duce! do you think no part of your Character lies open?

*Auth.* Yes, as wide as most Mens to Laughter, but not to Contempt. 'Tis true a Man of Wit may say he contemns me; but 'till he has given a good Reason for it, the World

World is not bound to take his bare Word in his own Cause.

*Fran.* Suppose he makes you ridiculous for Faults that are visible in you?

*Auth.* Why then, I will take care not to be more ridiculous by being out of Humour, either in defending or disowning them: And if he hits me with real Wit, will join in his Applause, as fairly as any of his Friends or my own Enemies.

*Fran.* Ay! this would be mighty prettily said, if you could get but a Friend or two to believe it——But when a thing is so strongly against Nature, you will excuse me if I incline to her Side against the thing.

*Auth.* O Sir! 'twill at worst be but a mistaken Generosity in you to assist the Weak; But, as I happen to have Truth and Fact at the Head of my Cause, your Generosity will make no formidable Figure against them.

*Fran.* Hey-day! Truth and Fact!

*Auth.* Ay, Sir; they are plain *English* Words——and if you have forgot what I mean by them, I will tell you: Don't you remember, at the little Theatre in the *Hay-Market*, upon the first Day of acting some new Piece there? when a personal Jest upon me flew sounce in my Face, while I sat in the Eye of a full



Audience, was not I as suddenly loud in my Laugh and Applause, as any common Spectator? Now as I could have no Warning of the Shot, was not my manner of receiving it a plain Proof that I was more pleased with the Conceit, than hurt with the Intention of it?

*Fran.* Well! to do you Justice, now I remember it, 'twas in some Farce of What-dee-callums! The—the ———

*Auth.* O! no matter what! if you remember the Fact I want no more of you.

*Fran.* But there is one thing more I have a mind to remember, which is, that I laughed louder at your Laugh, than I did at the Jest that raised you to it.

*Auth.* However, don't let your Complaisance to me depreciate the Wit of the Joke upon me.

*Fran.* I did not mean that! for if it had been a dull one, I won't suppose you would have laugh'd at it yourself: But as so strong an *in-promptu* of your Laugh was so unexpected, my Surprise might naturally give it the Preference.

*Auth.* Well, Sir! if you are so favourable to me in one Point, I hope you will do me Justice then in another: And therefore, not think

think it impossible, that with all my visible Faults upon me, I may still be unmov'd at any Rallery or Outrage, that the fairest or foulest Satire can offer me.

*Fran.* Why faith! I cannot see why a wiser Man than yourself might not be of the same Temper, if he could bring himself to it.

*Auth.* The Sweet-meat has but one simple Ingredient——don't let him be ashamed of his natural Incapacity, and he may taste it immediately.

*Fran.* Pooh! that's only saying don't feel Pain, and it will be no Pain at all.

*Auth.* Nay, if he *chooses* to feel it, my Receipt will do him no good! Now for my part I naturally hate Pain; and therefore will never let another's ill Opinion impose it upon me.

*Fran.* Right! and so as a sure Defence against it, you modestly resolve to have a good Opinion of yourself!

*Auth.* Just enough to make it a comfortable Security.

*Fran.* So that any Man who is as vain as yourself, may be equally out of the Danger.

*Auth.* Why really Danger is a State I don't choose to run into. And if Modesty cannot defend



defend me from it, I must even make use of a Weapon that will.

*Fran.* Meaning an impenetrable Pick-tooth Vanity.

*Auth.* A little more Favour upon that Head, if you please! Vanity may be sometimes as necessary to an Author, as Courage to a Soldier.

*Fran.* And yet, methinks, a Man of Sense would not boast of either.

*Auth.* Is there any great Boast in supposing one as unavoidable as the other is necessary?

*Fran.* Neither of them, at least, need shew themselves 'till they are called upon.

*Auth.* That I grant you; and therefore I had not shewn my Vanity, if you had not questioned my Sincerity.

*Fran.* Why should you think I did question it? Have not you observed all this while, I only doubted it, that I might draw out the whole Inside of you?

*Auth.* O dear Sir, as to that, I dare say I have been even with you! Your hearing me talk so long of myself can't have been more a Pleasure to you than it has to me! if that's your Triumph, you may catch me with the same Bait as often as you please.

*Fran.*

*Fran.* Well said again! open-bosomed to the last! — But Rallery apart—don't you find that your Friends now and then give you a home Thrust, by your lying so open as an Egotist?

*Auth.* O yes! frequently, but as they allow me to make a Push in my Turn, 'tis to me but an agreeable Exercise.

*Fran.* Well, Sir, though in this Case your being admitted to reply, may be a little Relief: Yet, in your Egotism as a Writer, you won't meet with such fair Play. For when a critical Reader gives you a Hit upon that weak Side, as you cannot always be upon the Spot to parry his Thrust with an Answer, it must be a long while before you can wipe off the Imputation; and don't you think *Egotism* is a Fault you have been a little too fond of in your *Apology*, &c?

*Auth.* I don't know but it may—however, I am not yet arrived at the Pain of repenting it.

*Fran.* At least, if ever you write again, I presume you will be more cautious of committing it.

*Auth.* I cannot be sure of that neither; for I find an immoderate Propensity to be at it again.

*Fran.*



*Fran.* What! do you write to please nobody but yourself!

*Auth.* O yes! provided I make myself the Subject, I don't care how much you are pleas'd with it.

*Fran.* Nor how little, I suppose!

*Auth.* That's what I have not yet said, Sir: But, I will venture to say this, that a Writer who does not first please himself, is only in a fairer way of pleasing nobody else.

*Fran.* O! but to be so remarkably fond of yourself is tiresome.

*Auth.* Not in the least to me! as for my Reader, I suppose he will do as I do, please himself; he is under no more Obligation to read than I am to write, and when we have not a mind to either, I dare say, we shall both let it alone.

*Fran.* Hah! your Reader is extremely obliged to you! But suppose a Man of Sense should read your Work through, and not like it?

*Auth.* O! Sir, as to that, we Authors are wary Traders, we seldom venture our All in one Bottom; we have our weak Readers as well as our wise ones: And who can positively say, from which sort it is, that so many daily Wits pick up their daily Bread?

*Fran.*

*Fran.* Well! thou art the *merriest* Madman that ever I met with!

*Auth.* And 'tis a moot Point, you know, whether Madmen are miserable, or not. Nay, if we may believe the Poet,

“ *There is a Pleasure sure in being mad,*

“ *Which only Madmen know——*

*Fran.* Pooh! prithee! don't affect to be more mad than you really are, neither.

*Auth.* You may give it what Name you will; but if the Affectation pleases me, and can hurt nobody else, why may not I enjoy it?

*Fran.* Should you like to be ridiculous?

*Auth.* When I can be happy with it, I shall not stand for a Trifle.

*Fran.* Is being ridiculous a Trifle?

*Auth.* Let it be what it will, it is so common a Case, that I don't see any body minds it; and if it were, as you seem to think it, a real Grievance, what miserable Devils would you make of half Mankind! But while there are so many illustrious Coxcombs in the World to keep one of my Obscurity in Countenance, why may not I be easy when I am found in such fashionable Company?

E

*Fran.*



*Fran.* But even admitting that Folly *were* Happiness, are you under any Necessity of so often shewing your Folly?

*Auth.* Don't plague me! for I will never be under the Trouble of hiding it. How can you teize me about it, when you know I have so utter an Insensibility of being ridiculous, that in a Conversation upon Musick, you have heard me fifty times *sing* before *Handel*, with as little Concern, as if I had been only squalling to myself?

*Fran.* That's true; and I confess, Sir, my Ears have as often been the painful Witnesses of it: Since then, you are resolved to secure your Happiness by being incorrigible, it would be barbarous in me to disturb it.

*Auth.* There you do your *self* wrong! for why should you suppose I am disturb'd, because you talk better Sense than I do?

*Fran.* How can you think so, and not make use of it?

*Auth.* You might as well ask me, when I hear a fine Song by a fine Voice, why I won't sing so myself? Now, Sir, if I am as well pleased with your Sense, as I might be with the Song, is not that as much Use as Nature will let me make of it? But if you expect my Practice should keep Time with your Precepts

—Why,

—Why, I can't do't—and your Censure then is no more than saying, I am a sad Singer.

*Fran.* I find you have been so used to play the Fool in Comedy, that you begin to be quite as easy, in the same Character, in real Life.

*Auth.* While I am easy, I don't care what Names you call me.

*Fran.* Don't value yourself upon that; for to be in the Wrong and easy in it, is a Virtue that every Knave or Blockhead may arrive at.

*Auth.* Blockheads, I grant you, may; but Knaves are not so happily qualified for it: For though they may be proof against Conscience, they are not impenetrable to the Fear of being found out. Now as you have not call'd my Morals in question, one part of your Position does not reach me: And then, as there is no Guilt in Stupidity, I can't see why a Blockhead is to blame if he goes to bed with a quiet Conscience.

*Fran.* But, good Sir! why so fond of being an avowed Blockhead?

*Auth.* Pardon me, I don't insist upon the Title! I am full as willing to pass for a Man of Sense; but when People won't let me, what



have I to do but (like other Blockheads) think well of myself? And when I have brought that about (which you know one seldom finds to be a difficult Matter) should not I be a greater Blockhead still to break my Rest for what another Man thinks of me?

*Fran.* Well said! I think the Weak and the Wicked of all Sorts never had so redoubted a Champion! For when, like another St. George, you are mounted on your own Opinion, with that terrible Lance your Pen in your Hand, what satirical Dragon can stand before you?

*Auth.* Sir, your humble Servant! I have not been flourish'd up into such a fine Light a great while: And yet, methinks, you should not wonder at my Courage, when you consider how little I have to lose by the Combat.

*Fran.* True! that is an Advantage, I grant you; and possibly the only one you have.

*Auth.* Well, Sir! since I know you will be, like the rest of my Friends, as much pleased when I am in the wrong as when I am in the right; if you have a mind to stand for the Dragon, come! spit your Fire, and I will venture cool Tilt at you.

*Fran.*

*Fran.* Not I indeed, Sir ; if you are so much upon your Mettle, you need but publish a few of your Precepts, and you will not want Dragons to encounter I'll warrant you : The single-sheet Criticks will find you Employment.

*Auth.* Indeed they won't—I am not so mad as to think myself a Match for the Invulnerable.

*Fran.* Have a care however, there's one of them *Foulwit* ; tho' he can't feel, he can bite.

*Auth.* Ay ! so will Bugs and Fleas ; but that's only for Sustenance ; every Thing must feed, you know ; and your creeping Criticks are a sort of Vermin, that if they could come at a King, would not spare him. Yet whenever they can persuade others to laugh at their Jest upon me, I will honestly make one of the Number ; but I must ask their Pardon, if that should be all the Reply I can afford them.

*Fran.* And this you would have other People do with the same Tranquillity.

*Auth.* I don't pretend to be a Pattern for other People, but as we have an equal Right to follow our own Fancies, I hope they will allow me to have a good Opinion of the Advice I take myself.

*Fran.*



*Fran.* O, Sir! they will easily allow you a Pleasure, which not one in a Thousand will believe you can take, or that there is a Tittle of Truth in all this Indolence you pretend to.

*Auth.* That would only prove it *incredibly* comfortable.

*Fran.* The Comforts of Vanity are solid Blessings indeed!

*Auth.* I had rather you would call it Prudence! For if a wrong Opinion does my Business, why should I part with it for one that would pinch me?

*Fran.* This is directly the stoical *Nonchalance* of that modish Philosopher my Lord *Foppington*.

*Auth.* Why, how do you think I could have given you so finish'd a Coxcomb, if I had not found a good deal of the same Stuff in myself to make him with?

*Fran.* Upon my Life, I believe you!

*Auth.* Upon my Soul, you may! and are as welcome to laugh at the one as the other.

*Fran.* A Man cannot always laugh when he is ask'd, you know; but I believe you may find People enough who will do you that Favour with less Ceremony.

*Auth.* O Sir, the less Ceremony generally the more joyous the Company. And I can assure

assure you Laughing never spoils it with me, though it be at myself.

*Fran.* But, my good Friend, are not you afraid your being so often the Butt of the Company should let you down lower, in Life, than you need be?

*Auth.* Not at all; he who can best bear it, is generally the Man mark'd out for it. But admitting it were to bring me under the Disadvantage you mention, I had rather be lower still, than be raised by my Gravity to the Honour of being treated like a solemn well-bred Insipid, with a hum-drum silent Civility. What! never be talk'd to! Have no more of the social Joy than an Elbow-Chair? No! no! abuse! abuse! roft and rally me to within an Inch of a Mad-man, rather than compliment me out of the Company! Come, don't lift up your Hands and Eyes at that wise Rate! for I shall not give up my Philosophy, because your Astonishment can't comprehend it.

*Fran.* Well! well! don't fall out of your Philosophy into a Passion, I beseech you, sweet Sir! But if I do not mistake, your first Principle of it is, that no Man's Opinion shall ever make you change the good one you have of yourself: Now, Sir, as that is not  
what



what I am labouring at (for Labour-in-vain, you know, is a mighty simple Employment) but as I have an equal Right with yourself to be as singular in my Opinion, pray give me leave to put a few more Questions upon yours, before I implicitly come into you.

*Auth.* Sir, you may banter me with fifty thousand, if you please: But if you were to ask them seriously, I am sure you must do it against your Conscience.

*Fran.* I hope you don't offer that as a modest Assertion!

*Auth.* No! no! I only mean it for Truth, and Truth, you know, never dissembles.

*Fran.* Error too has its Assurance upon Occasion.

*Auth.* Nay! nay! I won't say but that may sometimes have been my own Case: But now I must beg to be excused: For to me it is inconceivable (though you have so stoutly taken the other Side of the Question) but that in your Conscience you must all along have thought just as I do.

*Fran.* Give me leave, at least, not to think that ever any body thought like you.

*Auth.* Ay! ay! that's thinking still as I think.

*Fran.*

*Fran.* Since then I am to square my Way of Thinking by yours, I desire to know if I may be allowed to think that (however you may be content with your Character) a little more reserve in it would do it no harm, and that a Boy of Seventy odd is a very odd thing.

*Auth.* It is not a common thing, I grant you; nor am I yet wise enough to think it an unpleasant thing: There may be finer Birds in the Bush for ought I know, but what I have in my Hand shall even serve me to fool out the rest of my Time with. For to tell you the Truth, I am afraid my Character has taken too deep a Ply to be new-modell'd at my Time o'Day: So I must even wear it out as it is: And while I can contrive to be rather younger than wiser every Day, and every Way, except one, I hope you won't insist that there can be much Vanity in my being satisfied with such a Poverty of Character.

*Fran.* Don't be quite so confident, dear Sir! you first suppose me convinced of my Error, and then triumph before I confess it! For pray, Sir, why am I to believe that this odd Picture you present of yourself now, or as you have drawn it in your *Apology*, &c. is any more than a Copy of your Countenance?

F

What



What Proof or Inducement have you given to make us believe that all this frank and free Philosophy, which you so smilingly pretend to be master of, does really and honestly belong to you? Or if it *does*, why don't you honestly mend it?

*Auth.* So I would, if you could shew me the least Dishonesty in it.

*Fran.* Are not your Follies worth a little looking over?

*Auth.* Yes, and upon a Review I do not desire prettier Things to play with.

*Fran.* O ho! what! you are yet too young to leave them off it seems?

*Auth.* O dear! not at all: I would quit them this Moment upon moderate Terms.

*Fran.* And what may those be, good Sir?

*Auth.* Only provided you will give me any Thing in the mean time that will please me better.

*Fran.* What think you of the World's better Opinion? Would not that be as good a thing for a Man to pass away his Time with?

*Auth.* Yes: if I could have it *gratis*; but whether I am able to come up to the Price they may ask for it, is another Question. And I cannot see why I am obliged to go finer-dress'd than I can afford.

*Fran.*

*Fran.* I don't say you are : But you are not obliged to be a Sloven.

*Auth.* What do you call a Sloven ?

*Fran.* One that is dirtier than he needs be, that wears his Clothes as negligently as you do your Character, dawb'd with fifty Follies that you have the Face to be fond of.

*Auth.* Well, Sir ! and if I am this filthy Fool you would make me, how comes it that in so long an Acquaintance, you have never yet turn'd up your Nose at me ?

*Fran.* What, if I am not so nice, it does not follow that other People may not have done so.

*Auth.* And if we are to suppose they *have*, why are you excusable ? Why have not you done the same ?

*Fran.* Pooh ! I am out of the Question—you must not mind me—

*Auth.* Yes, but I must—'tis to you only, I put the Question.

*Fran.* Lord ! your Follies are as habitual to me as my own, I have known you a long time——yet as I am but one of the Thousands that know you, why should not you desire to be endured by every body as well as myself ?



*Auth.* No! no! give me your Hand, dear Sir! You are enough to do my Business! *Omne majus continet in se minus.* There cannot be many of my Acquaintance that need be ashamed of doing as you do.

*Fran.* What! you are making me a Compliment, only to shew how little common Sense will content you.

*Auth.* Yes truly, my Humility is much like that of a fine Lady's, I never complain when I have more than I deserve. Or not to rate myself so high, my Modesty is rather like that of *Jevon* the Comedian, who coming into a Club of his Acquaintance with dirty Shoes, contentedly took a clean Napkin from the Table to wipe them; when the Waiter desiring him to stay till he could fetch him a coarse Cloth, *Jevon* gently replied, No! no! thank you, my good Lad; this will serve me well enough. And so, Sir——*à fortiori.*

*Fran.* Humh! this does not seem to be so good a Compliment to me as t'other.

*Auth.* Why, it is making you do a little dirty Work, I confess; but as it is shewing you willing to do me justice at the same time, I know you won't stand upon Ceremony.

*Fran.* Not I, I'll assure you, I love to see you like yourself.

*Auth.*

*Auth.* 'Tis true, it does seem to be a little Blunder in Good-breeding, but it is none in my Argument.

*Fran.* Nay, I must allow that your Arguments are as extraordinary as your Follies can pretend to be.

*Auth.* Well, Sir! while (as I have often said) they hurt no body but myself, let me alone to find my Account in them: As for Fame, how little soever I may be in her Favour, I know she is too chaste a Lady to be won by every forward Pretender: I can gaze upon her Beauty without dying for her; the most busy about her is not always her Man; she has Wings to avoid, as well as to follow those that have, or have not Mérit; and I dare say you will now think it too late for me to run like a Child after a Swallow. As I have therefore but little Reputation to lose, I have the less to plague me with the Care of.

*Fran.* Right! and so you know *Cantabit vacuus, &c.*

*Auth.* But pray, Sir, don't from thence conclude, I should not be as willing to have more Sense in my Head as I should be to have more Money in my Pocket; but how to come at it, there's the Point! Now where it is not to be had, you know, Poor Colley, me-thinks,



thinks, need not be ashamed to do as the Proverb says the King does by his Right upon the same Occasion——go without it. If therefore (as I say) I can still be chearful under all these Disadvantages, though it should be at the Expence of wiser Peoples pitying my Weakness, I shall not complain of their holding me to a hard Bargain : But shall even solace myself with the End of an old *French* Song ;

*Quand on obtient ce qu'on aime,  
Qu'importe, qu'importe quel prix ?*

*What a Man has a mind to should ne'er make  
him nice,  
What Fool would be balk'd for the pitiful  
Price ?*

*Fran.* Well said, Discretion ! if I don't mistake this very Song was sung by a jolly *Frenchman*, when he took leave of the World, with a Swing under the Gallows : Are not you ashamed to be so far outdone in your own Philosophy ?

*Auth.* If you think my Philosophy foolish, I need not be ashamed of being outdone in the Follies of it.

*Fran.* Yet you will persist in them.

*Auth.*

*Auth.* While I am not in fear that any of them will come up to the *Frenchman's* Preferment, I will even wear them as I do my old Clothes, till I can get new of the same Cut.

*Fran.* Nay! you were always Fop enough to be in the Fashion; and I grant you that not to be a wise Man is no great wonder at this time o' Day. You may keep most of your Follies without being star'd at.

*Auth.* Let 'em be star'd at! it would be hard if I could not stand that, after having been star'd at by so many Thousands for near fifty Years together.

*Fran.* Nay! that's no Consequence neither; because, in a Play, you were never supposed to be yourself.

*Auth.* You are right—but that was only one of my wanton ways of expressing myself.

*Fran.* Hah! to be wanton when a Fellow is almost three parts of an hundred Years old, is something particular indeed!

*Auth.* Why, there is no Vanity in that, is there?

*Fran.* No, no! there's only a good deal of Courage in it.

*Auth.* Call it what you will, provided you allow there may be something I like in it, I don't think you can well give it a hard Name.

*Fran.*



*Fran.* If I should, I suppose you would not mind it.

*Auth.* Not much from any body else: But from you, I should still have something to say to it.

*Fran.* Why, do you find I have a different Opinion of you, from what the rest of the World has?

*Auth.* Yes, for I see you have a better Opinion of me than I deserve.

*Fran.* What do I shew it in?

*Auth.* You abuse me more than you do any body else.

*Fran.* That's only fancying I have a quicker Eye to your Errors, than to other Peoples: But I love to speak as I think, you know.

*Auth.* However, you are not so weak as to say *every* thing you think; nor always so cunning as to hide what you have not a mind to say.

*Auth.* You can't say I dissemble with you, at least.

*Auth.* Don't be too positive; for you have one very suspicious Quality; you never find fault with any body you don't like.

*Fran.* If finding fault is a Proof of Approbation, you may as well fancy I like your *Odes*, for I don't remember I ever commended them.

*Auth.*

*Auth.* Pooh! that's only not to be particular; an *Ode* is a Butt, that a whole Quiver of Wit is let fly at every Year! And when the Merriment rises to a Chorus upon it, you would be almost ridiculous to be out of it: For none but Dunces would be serious Criticks upon them, and those you know are unanswerable.

*Fran.* Otherwise, you would insinuate that your *Odes* are defensible.

*Auth.* No, yet if they are not less pardonable than those of my Predecessors, there can be no great Shame in not coming nearer *Horace* than they did: And if *Horace* himself had been obliged, like me, to have wrote four and twenty times upon the same Subject, might it not be a fair Question, whether he would have been always able to come up to his *Carmen Sæculare*?

*Fran.* O ho! what! you are squeaking for Mercy, I find! But pray, Sir, when did you ever hear of any ever shewn to the Lays of a Laureat?

*Auth.* Never! and as no Man can hope for it, there can be no great Disgrace in not meeting with it. Therefore *Dryden* seldom if ever suffered any of His to go farther than the Room they were sung in; and though his



*Feast of Alexander*, perhaps, never had its equal; yet when the Writing of an Ode became his *Duty*, even to those Princes whose Favourite he was, and whose Government, in his other Poems, he so often professed to admire: We, notwithstanding, do not find that in all his six Miscellany-Volumes, he had been tempted to give any one of those his annual Productions a Place. Does not this look as if he knew, without the Musick to them, they had but an *Adjective* Merit, and would not stand by themselves.

*Fran.* How come you then to have so much better Opinion of your own Odes, as to publish them in almost every News-paper?

*Auth.* Softly, good Sir, I am not quite so vain; for they constantly creep into those Papers without my Consent or Knowledge: How they come there, I do not give myself the Trouble to enquire! probably some poor Spy of the Press may filch them out of the several Parts of the Voices at a Practice: Yet if they would be so merciful as never to print more Nonsense than I write, I could with less Concern compound for the Felony.

*Auth.* Well! I see you are cunning enough to find a Hole for your Nonsense to creep out at.

*Fran.*

*Fran.* O dear Sir, I have a much deeper Cunning than that! when they once get out of my Hands into the Composers, they serve all my Purposes as well as if a whole College of Criticks were not able to find a single Fault in them.

*Fran.* From you, I suppose, we must take this for Modesty now; but I am afraid it is not quite the thing.

*Auth.* If it be true, it is as good a thing.

*Fran.* But that's still another Question.

*Auth.* That I believe it true, is no Question.

*Fran.* O Sir! nobody questions your Vanity.

*Futh.* If it were in my *Power* to be modest, I don't see you would ever allow me so.

*Fran.* However you need not be so furly, as never to shew us a Spice of it.

*Auth.* Pooh! that's a Challenge it would be Impudence to answer. Modesty is a Maid, that is asham'd to call herself by her own Name; how then can I answer you, when you have so sily tied up my Tongue? Not but I believe I have a back Way to slip into your better Opinion.

*Fran.* Hah! I should be glad to see you there.



*Auth.* Why then, Sir, how comes it, that with all these Faults you have tied to my Tail, you still see I keep better Company than you do!

*Fran.* And how will your Modesty make that out?

*Auth.* Why, I keep you Company, and you keep me Company.

*Fran.* Gad so! there you have hit it off indeed; but do you know, facetious Sir, that a wiser Man than I, may play with a Puppy sometimes.

*Auth.* Nay! if I am as much in Favour as *Frisk* is, I am pretty well off.

*Fran.* There's no taking you down, I see.

*Auth.* Don't be uneasy at that, I can take the Will for the Deed; I know you are inclin'd to humble me, because you find it so difficult.

*Fran.* No! I'll even give you over, you are full as well as you are; if your Assurance were lower'd you might not have so good an Opinion of yourself, and then you would be spoil'd.

*Auth.* If I am spoil'd, 'tis owing to your Flattery.

*Fran.* That's merry, indeed!—I flatter you!

*Auth.*

*Auth.* Yes; how came you to take all this pains to mend me, if you thought I was good for nothing?

*Fran.* Pooh! many a silly Fellow may be mended, and not be good for much then neither.

*Auth.* And yet I am good enough for you, I see, though I am not mended at all.

*Fran.* That only supposes I have an ill Taste; which, if I had, would be no great Proof of your being one Jot better than I think you.

*Auth.* I don't desire to be better.

*Fran.* That's the common Modesty of Assurance!

*Auth.* A modest Man in your Hands would have a fine time on't truly.

*Fran.* I don't know how you contrive to flatter yourself, for if ever I said I liked you in my Life, I have utterly forgot it.

*Auth.* You have too much Wit to have a good Memory.

*Fran.* And you have so much, that I don't understand you.

*Auth.* Then let it be as you say—Ay! Ay! you always speak as you think of me.

*Fran.* I hope then you don't doubt my Sincerity.

*Auth.*



*Auth.* Not in the least, I don't desire a better Proof of it.

*Fran.* Why so, pray, would my good Word do you any Harm?

*Auth.* I am not sure that your ill Word does not do me as much Good.

*Fran.* I can't possibly say any thing to that, unless it were intelligible.

*Auth.* Nay, I only mean, that as Sincerity, in an ironical Dress, is much more agreeable to me, than in a literal one; I therefore may safely say, you always speak as well of me as I desire.

*Fran.* At this rate you may suppose few Men alive have a more laudable Character than yourself; for (if lying under an ill Tongue is a Proof of it) nobody, I grant, has been better abused.

*Auth.* I am afraid you do me too much Honour, for that implies more Merit than I am Master of.

*Fran.* Pooh! That's only saying you are no more abused than comes to your Share: Value yourself upon that as much as you please.

*Auth.* If I saw you abuse any body but me I should not value myself upon that neither: But as I have you all to myself, the more you single me out for your Mirth, the easier

you

you make me: For if you were once to take off your Cynical Mask, I am not sure there might be weight enough in me to balance the Obligation.

*Fran.* My Mask! Now, if other People were to hear you talk thus, might not a modest Man be tempted to think you a very impudent Fellow?

*Auth.* Yes! and so may you too, if you please: But pray, Sir, why may not I dissemble as well as you, and be just as impudent as you are ill-natur'd?

*Fran.* Thou art an incorrigible Whelp, and so let's call another Cause. Come let me see some of your Fooleries.

*Auth.* As many as you please, now I have eas'd my Heart a little, I will shew you any Thing: What sort should you like least?

*Fran.* Any thing you like Best, may come up to that, I believe. I don't care what it is.

*Auth.* Nor I neither——There they lie! be pleased to displease yourself!

*Fran.* What's this? Hah! the very thing I wanted to see! the *Epilogue upon yourself*, I was not in Town when you spoke it. Let's see now, if you can cheat me as well as you did your Audience, for I hear they liked it.

*Auth.*



*Auth.* If you have a mind it should cheat you too, you must hear me repeat it.

*Fran.* Well, that's but fair; for I suppose you writ it rather to be heard than read: But prithee, how could you have the Assurance to speak any thing upon so ticklish a Subject?

*Auth.* From my Vanity! I had a mind to see if I could not make the Town laugh *louder* at me, than all the Wits that had worried me for above twenty Years before: And as an honest *English* Admiral said, when he had burnt, sunk, and destroy'd the Enemy—

*I ha' dun't.*

*Fran.* Nay! you are a bold *Briton*, indeed!

*Auth.* But, to give you a more serious Reason, I was almost under a charitable Necessity of doing it.

*Fran.* What do you mean?

*Auth.* I had given my Promise to play the Part of *Fondle Wife* in *the Old Batchelor*, one Night, for a Friend's Friend in distress, but not daring to hope that so short a Part would be strong enough to fill the House for him, I fancied an Epilogue upon so particular a Subject might make People a little more curious to come to it; and accordingly it had its full and sufficient Effect.

*Fran.*

*Fran.* Well ! let's hear it.

*Auth.* I must first tell you, that the Success having encouraged me to repeat it a second and third Night, for my own Profit, I was obliged (to avoid an Absurdity) to alter a Line or two; and with that Variation you now have it.

*Fran.* Away with it.

*Auth.* *Now worn with Years, and yet in Folly strong,  
Now to act Parts, your Grandsires saw when young!  
What could provoke me!—I was always wrong.*

*Fran.* Well said—Modesty and Assurance! Ridiculous enough.

*Auth.* Nay! if you flatter me, you will put me out of Countenance!

*Fran.* O! pray keep it! go on I beseech you.

*Auth.* *To hope, with Age, I could advance in Merit!  
Even Age well acted, asks a youthful Spirit :  
To feel my Wants, yet shew 'em thus detected,  
Is living to the Dotage, I have acted !  
T' have acted only Once excus'd might be,  
When I but play'd the Fool for Charity!  
But fondly to repeat it!—Senseless Ninny!  
—No — now—as Doctors do—I touch the Guinea!  
And while I find my Doses can affect you,  
'Twere greater Folly still, should I neglect you.*

H

*Fran.*



*Fran.* Well! so far the Cheat is fair enough:  
For though a Man might *read* this without  
moving a Muscle, yet as you *repeat* it, one  
need not be ashamed to laugh at it.

*Auth.* That's all it pretends to—but don't  
interrupt me.

*Though this Excuse, at White's they'll not allow me;  
The Ralliers There, in Diff'rent Lights will shew me.  
They'll tell you There: I only act—shy Rogue!  
To play with Cocky! — O! the doting Dog!  
And howsoe'er an Audience might regard me.  
One—tifs ye Nykin, amply might reward me!*

*Fran.* By the way who play'd your Cocky  
then?

*Auth.* Mrs. Woffington, the first Season of  
her being upon this Stage.

*Fran.* O ho! they might give you a Colt's  
Tooth for her indeed.

*Auth.* Let them enjoy the Jest, with Laugh incessant!  
For True, or False, or Right, or Wrong, 'tis pleasant!  
Mixt, in the wisest Heads, we find some Folly;  
Yet I find few such happy Fools—as Colley!

*Fran.* Nay! you have a particular Receipt  
for Happiness truly.

*Auth.* So long t' have liv'd the daily Satire's Stroke,  
Unmov'd by Blows, that might have fell'd an Oak,  
And yet have laugh'd the labour'd Libel to a Joke.

*Suppose*

*Suppose such want of Feeling prove me dull!  
 What's my Aggressor then--a peevish Fool!  
 The strongest Satire's on a Blockhead lost;  
 For none but Fools or Madmen strike a Post.  
 If for my Folly's larger List you call,  
 My Life has lump'd 'em! There you'll read 'em all.  
 There you'll find Vanity, wild Hopes pursuing;  
 A wide Attempt, to save the Stage from Ruin!  
 There I confess, I have outdone my own out-  
 doing!*

*Fran.* A very fair Confession! but with the old Mixture, Modesty and Assurance again!

*Auth.* Pray don't find fault with my Lemon and Sugar.

*Fran.* Go on! go on!

*Auth.* As for what's left of Life, if still 'twill do;  
 'Tis at your Service, pleas'd while pleasing you:  
 But then, mistake me not! when you've enough;  
 One slender House declares both Parties off:  
 Or Truth in homely Proverb to advance,  
 I pipe no longer than you care to dance.

*Fran.* Well! I fancy I had as good not to be too Critical now, that I may be believ'd to be right the next time I happen to laugh at your being in the wrong.



*Auth.* O Sir! as to that, pray please yourself: I don't want to compound with you: Let our Account be always open, I beseech you: You may draw upon me as deep as you will: For while Laughter passes for Payment in Wit, you'll find mine as good as the Bank: A contented Vanity is never afraid of being poor or ridiculous.

*Fran.* Nor ever feels the Misfortune when it falls! Therefore as *Æsop* says in the Play,

*How noble were the thing call'd Knowledge,  
Did it but lead us to a Bliss like thine!*

*Auth.* Then, dear Sir! how can your Wisdom be so weak, as to let your Wit so often wash a Blackamore? Or why is even a Black a Fool, for being content with his natural Complexion?

*Fran.* Since you are so fond of your sweet Features, and were not ashamed to shew them to the whole Town in your Epilogue. Why would not you print it, and send Copies of so odd an Original into the Country too?

*Auth.* So I would, if I could have seen which way it would have been worth my while.

*Fran.* Do it still then, in some Miscellany; or it might pass very properly, as a  
fort

sort of Theatrical Anecdote, in the Supplement to *your Life*, &c. which, by the way, I hear you intend shortly to come out with.

*Auth.* Then you hear more than I ever thought of, or shall ever trouble my Head about: No, if I were to publish, I don't know any thing would sooner tempt me than the very Conversation that has now pass'd between us: I have seen two Faces in the same Picture make a very agreeable *Contrast*.

*Fran.* Yes! and I suppose your Modesty would choose to make yourself the *Hercules*, and me the *Antæus*.

*Auth.* No, Sir! I should be as well pleased if I were the *Diogenes*, and you the *Alexander*. For I am as incorrigibly wise as you are apt to wonder at it.

*Fran.* That might be like one of us indeed; but however able an Artist you may be, I am not quite so fond of being in a *Metzotinto* as you are.

*Auth.* If I were to set a fictitious Name to your Face, what Objection have you to it?

*Fran.* None in the least. You have so many Friends, who have the same unmerciful Value for you, that the Number may very well keep any one of them in Countenance. For who knows *Colley*, that has not laugh'd



laugh'd at the open Oddness of his Follies ?  
And I believe there are as few that need be  
asham'd of it.

*Auth.* I'gad ! I'll even take your Word for  
the rest of them then ! And to-morrow-morn-  
ing I will answer you all in a Lump ! The  
same Plea shall serve to all your Declarations !

*Fran.* It will, at worst, make good  
your own Words in the Epilogue ; for we  
shall all allow you to have been right when  
you said——

—— *I was always wrong !*

*Auth.* Well ! if I should not so nicely hit  
yours ; however I shall keep up my own  
Character.

*Fran.* 'Tis a choice one, indeed !

*Auth.* Ay ! and it's now become *Hobson's*  
Choice too : So I will even make another meal  
of it.

*Fran.* Ay ! Ay ! any thing rather than starve  
your Fancy. But why don't you sometimes  
garnish your Dish (tho' there be but a cold  
Bit in it) with a little Poetical Parsly ? A  
Copy of Commendatory Verses from a Friend  
or so, before a Work might give it an Air of  
Vogue and Importance !

*Auth.*

*Auth.* Ay! if I had knack enough to be my own Friend, and could write them myself, then indeed I might be flatter'd up to my own Fancy; but as bad Verses are the Devil, and good ones I can't get up to — How shall I come at the Compliment?

*Fran.* Honestly buy it then! there's many a spruce Pen will take your own Account of your Merit, and do you the Favour for an Ounce and a Dinner.

*Auth.* Not unlikely, but *hot Air* is one of the Bubbles I never cared to come into: And though *Pegasus* may have been hack'd out upon these Occasions, I hate to hire a Jade that goes as heavy as a Dray-horse dragging the Load of a lumbering Dedication.

*Fran.* It's a long, long Way from your Door to the *Temple of Fame*; and if you don't now and then take a Lift, you will hardly get thither while you live.

*Auth.* Sir—as I have not the Honour of her Acquaintance, I shall make no Visits, where the Porter may justly refuse me Admittance. Nor will I borrow the lac'd Coat of another's Muse, to pass me for an Author of Eminence.

*Fran.* This is meer idle Wilfulness, you are not so chaste in other Points of your Conduct;



Conduct ; you have been less ashamed of greater Follies than this would amount to.

*Auth.* Yes, when only my Ignorance commits them, I believe I may : But to be deliberately, knowingly vain, is, what I cannot so easily get over : No ! to beg for Praise ! to proclaim my Vanity by beat of Drum ! to patronize a poetical Compliment to my self ! to approve, adopt, and own it ! pray, how little would this fall short of writing it myself ? What but the lowest Indigence of Spirit could away with it ? The barren Brain of a School-boy, that gets another to make his Exercise, is more excusable.

*Fran.* Why, you are in earnest, Colley !

*Auth.* Nay, I see you love to fool me up to it sometimes : But now I have shot my Bolt, you may even be wise by yourself if you please.

*Fran.* Suppose a Muse of Merit then should make you a Compliment, you would not be so ill-bred as not to publish it.

*Auth.* Would not the Compliment be greater to me, if the Author publish'd it himself ?

*Fran.*

*Fran.* Ay, but if it did not stand at the Head of your Work, it might not so well answer his Purpose.

*Auth.* Like enough, if he had any other View, than my private Acknowledgment for it: But if he expected Me to publish it, I must suppose he rather wrote to give the World a Sample of his Own Wit, than do a Favour to Mine.

*Fran.* You would not find fault with a Present of Value, sure!

*Auth.* Yes but I would, if I did not like the Terms I am to receive it upon; and I should think publishing my own Praise, would be buying the Favour too dear: Nay the stronger his Verse, the greater would be my Objection to it.

*Fran.* This is a new Way of Thinking.

*Auth.* So are most reasonable Ways: For my part I know very little Difference between the Editor and Author of his own Praise: Besides, Authors are so apt to be partial to Favours of that Kind, that they often give us Mole-hills for Mountains, and provided they are but commended, don't mind whether the Compliment is made them in a fine Copy or a flat one.



*Fran.* Why, that indeed is a little too often the Case: But you told me some time ago you had a Favour of this Sort from a Female Pen (upon her Reading *your Life*) that you thought had something uncommon in it: If you have it here, I wish you would let me see it.

*Auth.* With all my Heart, if I can find it.

*Fran.* Why would not you publish it before your second Edition?

*Auth.* For a Reason you will hardly believe—I lik'd it so well, I was really ashamed to do it.

*Fran.* You are in the Right, I cannot believe that was your Reason.

*Auth.* Nay, since you will not allow me any Modesty at all: I may as well make the most of my Vanity, and fairly print it, as only shewn to you in our present Conversation: For *that* I will publish, depend upon it.

*Fran.* With all my Heart, and let it stand in this very Place, if you please, for I will see it. A Compliment to *Colley* must be a Rarity indeed!

*Auth.* There it is, then.

*Fran.* Humh! this is a Hand I have seen.

*Auth.* You have seen several of her Verses sent over to *White's*. Nay, you may read it yourself, it wants no help.

To

TO MR. CIBBER.

Fran. *When you advis'd me, Sir, to choose  
 Some odd new Subject for the Muse,  
 From Thought to Thought unpleas'd I chang'd;  
 Through Nature, Art, and Science rang'd:  
 But still could nought discover new,  
 'Till happily I fixt on you.  
 Your Stoic Turn, and chearful Mind,  
 Have mark'd you out from all Mankind,  
 The oddest Theme, my Muse could find.  
 Like other Men, you nothing do,  
 The World's one Round of Joy to you!  
 Though Sense and Merit are your Choice,  
 You can with gayest Rakes rejoice:  
 The Wise, the Weak, the Sot, the Sage,  
 Your Hours can equally engage;  
 Can taste them all, in Season fit,  
 And match their Follies, or their Wit.  
 Not Wit that libels, makes you grave;  
 At what you smile, my Mind would rave!  
 To rail at you, is Wit run riot;  
 When Snarlers grin, your Face is quiet:  
 Your Faults that lately swell'd your Volume,  
 Are so confess'd, they've rais'd a Column!  
 Which when weak Spleen would shake or shock,  
 It self it bruises on a Rock!*



Truth has, in you, so fixt her Seat  
 Not all your Converse with the Great,  
 Has yet misled you — to Deceit.  
 Your Breast so bare, so free from Blame,  
 Why, sure ! your Tongue and Heart's the same !  
 Most Hearts the harder grow with Years,  
 But yours, yet, lends th' Afflicted Tears !  
 Has Merit pin'd in want and Grief ?  
 Your bounteous Hand has brought Relief.  
 To you, where Frailty shades the Soul,  
 One shining Grace commands the whole !  
 Can no Experience make you wiser ?  
 Nor Age convert you to a Miser ?

What other Writer of our Isle,  
 Like you at Gall of Wit could smile ?  
 Above the Weakness to return it,  
 Or scarce concern'd enough to scorn it ?  
 You, still unmov'd, have stood their Dirt,  
 Knowing 'twould neither stick nor hurt.  
 While graver Bards, by Dunces stung,  
 With Verse provok'd, aveng'd the Wrong ;  
 With an uncommon Candour you,  
 Such Bards more humanly subdue ;  
 Calm and compos'd, your conscious Spirit  
 Can celebrate with Praise their Merit :

Thus

*Thus yielding, conquer; for sure! Nature  
Must feel such Praise sting worse than Satire.*

*Now too, in other Points, I find you,  
Where modern Wits are thrown behind you.  
Some praise a Patron and reveal him:  
You paint so true, you can't conceal him.  
Their gaudy Praise undue but shames him,  
While yours by Likeness only names him.*

*Fran.* Meaning, I suppose, your Dedication  
to a certain Gentleman.

*Auth.* You are right.

*Fran.* Still am I warm'd to sing your Oddness,  
Your Singularity in Goodness.  
When to the Wealthy and the Great,  
Adorn'd with Honours and Estate,  
My Muse forlorn has sent her Prayer;  
Shunn'd were the Accents of Despair;  
'Till your excited Pity sped her,  
And with collected Bounties fed her;  
Cheer'd her sad Thoughts, like genial Spring,  
And tun'd once more her Voice to sing;  
Bear then her grateful Notes, and be  
Yourself her Theme and Harmony.  
Could she like you exalt her Lays,  
Polite Artificer of Praise!

*From*



*From the sweet Song you'd jealous grow,  
And guard the Laurel on your Brow.*

*Auth.* Well, Sir, what think you? why so  
coſtly in your Commendation? If they were  
written to any body elſe, ſhould not you think  
them very pretty?

*Fran.* Why, as they are, they are better  
than I expected: They are neither fulſom,  
flat, nor fuſtian: the Colours are like, and  
will fit no Face but your own: I don't ſee  
why you may not print them.

*Auth.* I have but one Scruple, her having ſet  
me in too favourable a Light, for a little com-  
mon Humanity.

*Fran.* Why ſo? It is but a natural Ac-  
knowledgment that would be due to any one,  
for the ſame Favour: A Man may receive  
that, without ſetting any great Value upon  
himſelf.

*Auth.* That's true—I'll e'en print them.

*Fran.* Beſides, have not fifty better Authors  
done the ſame, before you?

*Auth.* Right!

*Fran.* And ſuppoſe, according to your own  
Poſition, it was in them an Act of Vanity,  
I hope you are as well able to ſtand being in  
the Wrong, as the beſt of them.

*Auth.*

*Auth.* That's true again—I'll print them.

*Fran.* Then you need not fear the World will so far gratify your Vanity, as to suppose you writ them yourself.

*Auth.* No, that would be only taking Merit from me with one Hand to give it me with another—No! no! I'll print them.

*Fran.* Ay! Ay! it would be losing part of your Character to be ashamed of any thing, that hurts nobody but yourself.

*Auth.* It will be but of a Piece with the rest of me—Print 'em, pos! let it be wrong, though I should know it to be so, even that way it can make no very new Monster of me: For as

———*Video meliora, proboque.*

“ I see what's Right, 'tis true.”

May shew a Man not to be quite a Fool: So when he is not quite wise,

*Deteriora sequor* ——

“ But still what's Wrong pursue.”

Proves at least, that his Frailty is of a very ancient standing, so weak it seems was Nature about seventeen hundred Years ago.

*Fran.*



*Fran.* And yet I dare say you had resolved to be in the Wrong, before you found you had so old a Precedent for it.

*Auth.* Why troth! I can't say but I had — however, you see how naturally good Wits jump!

*Fran.* Yes, truly, the Classics and you are mighty apt to fall into the same way of Thinking.

*Auth.* We sometimes tally in our Vanity at least: For I question if any thing I have said to you to-day, goes beyond *Horace's* Expostulation with his Friend *Trebatius*, where, for a whole Satire together, he suffers him to be as free with his Errors as you are with mine, and they both talk of nothing else!

*Fran.* Ay, but you see *Horace* has Sense enough to prove himself in the Right in the Close of his Conversation.

*Auth.* So might I too, if like him I would write Booty; when the Dialogue came all from his own Head, he might make his Friend as weak, and himself as wise as he pleased: But you shall see, Sir, I am above those little Arts; and whenever I publish what has pass'd  
be-

between you and me, I will fairly shew myself in the wrong to the end of the Chapter.

*Fran.* Right! and so honestly save the Critics the Labour of proving you so.

*Auth.* Let them prove! they will have much ado to prove any thing I won't grant: So their fighting with a blind Man will be no great Proof of their Prowess.

*Fran.* This, indeed, is out-doing all that ever went before you! *Horace* was a Fool to you.

*Auth.* Why, if you will have me a Fool, had not I as good be an eminent one? Better die in a Blaze than be lost in a Fog.

——*Magnis tamen excidit ausis.*

“ ——In high Attempts he fell.”

Is as favourable a Fame as I aspire to.

*Fran.* Ay, ay, and enough in all Conscience: For whatever you risk by it, as long as you break nobody's Neck but your own, there is no great harm done.

*Auth.* Hah! I see you have a sensible Value for me.

*Fran.* O! it would be uncharitable not to have some, while I see you have so little for  
K yourself.



yourself. So, my dear modest *Horace*! since you intend to make it a drawn Battle between us, I will even leave you as I found you, and bid you good-by; for 'tis past one, and I must away to *Westminster*, we shall have a long Day there.

*Auth.* Well! I love to see you so like myself, however: For you are generally in as much haste to be in the wrong as I am! Though let me call it what I will, 'tis but the same Benevolence for People in Power that you have for me——only to make us both wiser than we care to be.

*Fran.* Why, truly, I believe it may be much about Pains to the same Purpose: But you see, Sir, how closely I follow your Philosophy! I love to be in the wrong my own way at least. When shall I see you?

*Auth.* Don't I go with you to the Farm tomorrow?

*Fran.* That's true! I have saved a Corner of a Coach for you. There will be Musick, Poetry, Painting, and Architecture, as merry a Match for *Whisk* as you could wish for! So don't forget.

*Auth.* I will be with you at Breakfast——  
Your Servant.

P O S T-



# POSTSCRIPT.

*To those few unfortunate Readers and Writers, who may not have more Sense than the Author.*

GENTLEMEN,

I am told that a Moral Writer, who would give Lessons to Mankind, should have a persuasive Pen, and Parts proportioned to so laudable an Undertaking: Yet so (God-wot) it is, that without the least Pretension to this *sine quâ non* Accomplishment — we see how many Moral-mending Task-masters daily set themselves over us.

K 2

The



The Dogmatic Benevolence of our modern Wits is now swollen to such a Prodigality of Publick Spirit, that all the good Advice they can pile together, they rather choose to bestow upon their Fellow-Creatures, than take one Grain of it themselves. But in this Imputation I include none that have Sense enough to know they are not concerned in it: And that I may not myself fall under the same Censure, you are to consider me only as a Well-wisher to those of us whom these Tyrannical Writers have attempted to disturb in the lawful Enjoyment of (what their Arbitrary Power can have no Claim to) our natural Heaviness and Innocence: My Advice then, in the foregoing Pages, reaches no farther than to our quiet Fraternity; in me you have a Proof of its Profit; if you can persuade yourself into the same Temper (however light it may seem) you will still find it an unimpenetrable Armour. Thus accoutred then, you may bid Defiance to all the Terrors of superior Wit and fruitless Defamation; and manfully  
may

may stand up in Vindication of the native Rights and Liberties of inoffensive Ignorance and Error.

Let us then, Gentlemen, who have the Misfortune, to lie thus at the Mercy of those whose natural Parts happen to be stronger than our own; let us, I say, make the most of our Sterility! let us double and treble the Ranks of our Thickness, that we may form an impregnable *Phalanx* and stand every way in Front to the Enemy! or would you still be liable to less Hazard, lay but yourselves down, as I do, flat and quiet upon your Faces, when Pride, Malice, Envy, Wit, or Prejudice, let fly their formidable Shot at you, what Odds is it they don't all whistle over your Heads? Thus too, though we may want the Artillery of missive Wit to make Reprizals, we may at least, in Security, bid them kiss the Tails we have turn'd to them. Who knows but by this our supine, or rather prone Serenity, their disappointed Valour may become their own Vexation? Or let us yet at worst but solidly stand our Ground, like so many defensive stone-



Stone-posts, and we may defy the proudest  
*Jehu* of them all to drive over us. Thus,  
 Gentlemen, you see that Insensibility is not  
 without its Comforts! And as I give you  
 no worse Advice than I have taken myself,  
 and found my account in, I hope you will  
 have the Hardness to follow it, for your own  
 Good and the Glory of

*Your impenetrable humble Servant,*

C. CIBBER.

